

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 05227 01 OF 02 311237Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 AID-05 /054 W
-----128431 311350Z /53
P 311137Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5438

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 5227

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PDIT, ET, SO, US
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MENGISTU

REF: STATE 204910; STATE 206774

1. THIS TELEGRAM REPORTS IN DETAIL MY CONVERSATION WITH
PMAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM AUGUST 31. MENGISTU
HAD CALLED ME TO PALACE ON NO NOTICE WHATSOEVER IN RESPONSE
TO MY REQUEST FOR MEETING. SUMMARY OF CONVERSATION PROVIDED
ADDIS ABABA 5219. I MADE FOLLOWING PRESENTATION:

2. DEFENSIVE ARMS FOR SOMALIA

- OUR AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE SOMALIA DEFENSIVE
ARMS AID WAS MADE AT TIME WHEN INSURGENCY IN OGADEN WAS
AT VERY LOW LEVEL.
- ESCALATION OF FIGHTING THERE HAS CHANGED CONTEXT IN
WHICH ORIGINAL DECISION HAD BEEN MADE.
- WHILE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE STILL STANDS, WE WOULD
LIKE YOUR EXCELLENCY TO KNOW WE HAVE NO INTENTION TO
MOVE FORWARD WITH ITS IMPLEMENTATION WHILE OGADEN IS
IN FLAMES.
- WE HOPE THAT OAU MEDIATION WILL BEAR FRUIT, THAT THE
FIGHTING WILL END, AND THAT AN ENDURING SETTLEMENT OF
DISPUTE CAN BE REACHED.
- POLICY WAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED AT PRESS BRIEFINGS BY A
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ADDIS 05227 01 OF 02 311237Z

STATE DEPT SPOKESMAN AUG 10 AND AUG 17. SPOKESMAN
ALSO STATED WE CONSISTENTLY SUPPORT OAU PRINCIPLE OF
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF ITS MEMBER STATES.
- WE WOULD LIKE YOUR GOVERNMENT TO UNDERSTAND WE ARE RE-
FRAINING FROM SUPPLYING ARMS TO SOMALIA NOW PRECISELY BE-
CAUSE WE DO NOT WISH TO BECOME INVOLVED ON EITHER SIDE
IN PRESENT DISPUTE. IN CONTRAST, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO

UNDERSTAND MOTIVES OF AN OUTSIDE POWER WHICH SUPPLIES
BOTH SIDES OF AN INTER-AFRICAN CONFLICT.

3. AID

- MY GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED ME TO NOTE TO YOUR EXCELLENCY
OUR PLEASURE THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT, AFTER A LONG PERIOD
IN WHICH NOTHING HAPPENED, HAS NOW GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO
PROCEED WITH THREE NEW PROJECTS.
- WE WELCOME THIS AS EVIDENCE THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT VIEWS
US AS A LEGITIMATE PARTNER IN PURSUING GOALS OF ETHIOPIAN
REVOLUTION WHICH RELATE DIRECTLY TO IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIO-
ECONOMIC LEVELS OF ORDINARY CITIZENS OF ETHIOPIA.
- WE HAVE LONG BEEN INTERESTED IN HELPING TO ALLEVIATE
HUMAN WANT AND SUFFERING IN ETHIOPIA AND ELSEWHERE, AND
IN THAT CONNECTION, IF YOUR GOVERNMENT SEES WAYS IN WHICH
WE COULD HELP ALLEVIATE SUFFERING RESULTING FROM OGADEN
CONFLICT, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER PROPOSALS
TO THAT END.

4. AMBASSADOR

- MY GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED ME TO TELL YOUR EXCELLENCY THAT
WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR PROPOSAL TO SEND AN AMBASSADOR
TO WASHINGTON.
- SUCH ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN AS DEMONSTRATIVE SIGN YOUR
GOVERNMENT IS INDEED INTERESTED IN MORE NORMAL RELATIONS
SINCE, AS YOU KNOW, THERE HAS BEEN NO ETHIOPIAN AMBASS-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ADDIS 05227 01 OF 02 311237Z

ADOR IN WASHINGTON SINCE FEB 10, 1975, AND YOUR EMBASSY
THERE HAS RECENTLY BEEN IN CHARGE OF A THIRD SECRETARY.
- MEANWHILE, MY GOVERNMENT WISHES YOUR EXCELLENCY TO KNOW
WE ARE IN PROCESS OF THINKING ABOUT MATTER OF AN AMBASSADOR
FOR HERE.

5. MEDIA

- FINALLY, MY GOVERNMENT WISHES ME TO TELL YOUR EXCELLENCY
THAT WE HAVE NOTED CHANGE IN TONE AND COMMENT IN MEDIA
REFERENCES HERE TO THE UNITED STATES IN RECENT WEEKS AND
THAT WE FIND THIS TO BE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 05227 02 OF 02 311248Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 AID-05 DODE-00 /054 W

-----128575 311349Z /53

P 311137Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5439

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 5227

6. THIS TIME MENGISTU'S REACTION WAS OPEN, CORDIAL, AND TO THE POINT. HE EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE OVER POSITIVE VIEWS I HAD CONVEYED AND ASKED ME TO CONVEY SINCERE THANKS TO USG ON HIS BEHALF AND THAT OF PMAC. AS HE HAD TRIED CARRY ACROSS DURING PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS, HE SAID PMAC BELIEVED THAT US MISCONCEPTIONS AS TO PURPOSES OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION HAD BEEN RESULT OF LACK OF COMMUNICATIONS ON BOTH SIDES. HE RETAINED FIRM CONVICTION THAT FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WAS DEEP-ROOTED, AND THAT REVOLUTION WAS NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH US INTERESTS IN THIS PART OF AFRICA. HE WAS GLAD TO NOTE THAT REVOLUTION WAS NOW BETTER UNDERSTOOD IN US AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WOULD DEVELOP WITH FRUITFUL RESULTS IN FUTURE. HE INDICATED THAT PREVIOUS COMMENTS ON ACCREDITATION OF NEW AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION VERY SOON AND MADE CLEAR THAT APPOINTMENT WAS SINCERE INDICATION OF DESIRE TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

7. AFTER BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH BERHANU BAYEH, CONVERSATION TURNED TO MAJOR TOPIC OF HIS IMMEDIATE CONCERN, US WEAPONS AND SPARE PARTS. HE SAID SOMALIA HAD UNLEASHED OPEN AGGRESSION, USING ITS STOCKPILE OF WEAPONS ACCUMULATED OVER LAST TEN YEARS. PEOPLE IN OGADEN HAD SUFFERED UNTOLD ATROCITIES. INTERVENTION HAD NOT BEEN REPULSED SO FAR. ETHIOPIAN ARMY TRYING TO BEAT INVADERS BACK, BUT WAS HAMPERED BY SHORTAGES OF EQUIPMENT. STRUGGLE TO FORCE BACK ENEMY WAS BEING CARRIED OUT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ADDIS 05227 02 OF 02 311248Z

ESSENTIALLY WITH DEFENSIVE WEAPONS ACQUIRED IN PAST FROM US. THESE WEAPONS NOW LACKED, IN TREMENDOUS PROPORTIONS, SUFFICIENT AMMUNITION AND SPARE PARTS TO CARRY ON. ALTHOUGH WEAPONS ALONE COULD NOT BE DECISIVE ELEMENT IN WAR WITHOUT SUFFICIENT SPIRIT AND VALOR TO PUT THEM TO EFFECTIVE USE, AND THOUGH ETHIOPIANS FIRMLY BELIEVED VICTORY WOULD BE THEIRS, THEY URGENTLY NEEDED WEAPONS TO COMBAT ENEMY.

8. NOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF USG EXPRESSED IN MY PRESENTATION, MENGISTU SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER IT OF HISTORIC IMPRO-

TANCE TO ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE IF USG WOULD CONSIDER PROVISION OF WEAPONS. THIS WOULD PROVE DECISIVE FACTOR IN DETERMINING OUTCOME OF STRUGGLE. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS NOT PRESENTING NEW REQUESTS OR ASKING FOR WEAPONS ON GRAND SCALE, BUT WAS REFERRING ONLY TO SPARE PARTS AND AMMO ORDERS PLACED IN PAST, AGREEMENTS ALREADY SIGNED AND CONTRACTED FOR. HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF DELIVERIES COULD BE RESUMED IMMEDIATELY. ETHIOPIAN AIR FORCE, WITH ITS SMALL NUMBER OF US FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, WAS ATTEMPTING VALIANTLY TO WITHSTAND COMBINED AIR MIGHT OF THREE NATIONS (SIC). STRAIN WAS TREMENDOUS, AND THAT WAS WHY HE WAS SAYING THAT GESTURE BY US WOULD BE DECISIVE FACTOR AND WOULD GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS MOVE TO SAFEGUARD INTEGRITY OF ETHIOPIAN MASSES. EPMG EFFORTS FOR BENEFIT OF MASSES WERE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT MOTIVATIONS OF SELF-INTEREST OR PERSONAL GAIN. FOR THIS REASON, USG ASSISTANCE WOULD BE RECOGNIZED SUBSTANTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AND WOULD GO FAR TO MEET GOAL OF HELPING BROAD MASSES.

9. MENGISTU CLOSED BY AGAIN EXPRESSING PLEASURE OVER RECEIVING POSITIVE GESTURE FROM USG AND CONVEYING SINCERE GREETINGS AND GOOD WISHES FOR PROSPERITY OF US PEOPLE. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION OVER HIS GOOD WORKS AND OFFERED TO PASS THEM ON. I REMINDED HIM OF MY STATEMENTS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS THAT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ADDIS 05227 02 OF 02 311248Z

OUR GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP TERMINATED AND ADDED THAT I WOULD BE LESS THAN HONEST IF I DID NOT SAY IT MY UNDERSTANDING THAT US IS NOT PREPARED TO RESUME IT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. NONETHELESS, I OFFERED TO MAKE HIS REQUEST KNOWN TO WASHINGTON.
TIENKEN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS05227
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770314-1255
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977085/aaaaaeba.tel
Line Count: 205
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 88a11759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 204910, 77 STATE 206774
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1567330
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH MENGISTU
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, ET, SO, US, (MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/88a11759-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009